



WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. of L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS

No. 67.

801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BILL

Washington, July 12.--On Wednesday, July 10, Chairman Wilson of the House Labor Committee called up for discussion the Department of Labor bill, which had been reported out of the Labor Committee some time ago, the committee unanimously recommending that it pass. Almost the entire session was devoted to the consideration of the bill; and numerous amendments were submitted and accepted by Chairman Wilson, who had charge of the bill during the debate. The bill provides, as its name implies, for a department of labor, with a secretary at its head who shall be a member of the president's cabinet, power being conferred on this official to use the good offices of the department in industrial disputes. Mediation and conciliation between employer and employee is one of the distinctive features of the measure. It is expected that a vote will be had on the next calendar Wednesday, July 17. No opposition to the bill has thus far been had, and it will likely pass the house by an unanimous vote.

NIGHT SCHOOL FOR FOREIGNERS

Aberdeen, Wash., July 13.--The city school board has inaugurated a night school for the purpose of giving those who are not familiar with the English language an opportunity to study English and also to secure information through this medium. At the first session of the school 67 applicants presented themselves, and at the end of the first eight days 235 names had been placed upon the roster. The applicants range in age from 16 to 60 years, and include Swedish, Finnish, Polish, German, Norwegian, Italian, Russian, Austrian, Greek and Bohemian races. All attending the school are deeply interested, and the action of the school board will undoubtedly be crowned with generous results.

INTERESTING BROCHURE

Washington, July 13.--There has just been issued jointly by the Central Labor and Building Trades Councils of Los Angeles a neat and interesting brochure, entitled "Struggles of Organized Labor in Los Angeles," compiled from special articles published in the San Francisco Bulletin. The pen picture of the indescribable and unspeakable Otis is a character study that is indeed true to the subject. The pamphlet is well worth the time spent in its perusal.

Washington, July 13.--James H. Barry, editor of the San Francisco Star, wields a pen that attracts, his contributions not only designating him as a man of nerve and verve, but likewise a student of fundamentals in the economic organizations of labor. Mr. Barry is a staunch trade unionist, and his article, "The Minimum Wage," in the last issue of the Star, is of such a trenchant character, dealing with a theory now in the rough ashlar period, that it is not only timely but his viewpoint illuminating and interesting. It is as follows: "Strike and strike and yet again strike is in the news. Everywhere the workers complain of the high cost of living with which wage increase does not keep pace at all. The strikes in progress or threatened are of such proportions that only national governments can deal with them. They can't deal with them solely by repression, government must try something else. There is but one thing to try, we are told. That is the establishment of a minimum wage. It may have to be tried, since so many people cannot think any further than that device, but the minimum wage will fail. The minimum wage is only a temporary stop-gap, which will temporarily relieve conditions only to make them worse eventually. There cannot be successful wage regulation by law while conditions which the law cannot touch operate irresistibly to lower wages. The best thing government can do is to make opportunity for work for every man. It can do this only by unlocking the land for the use of the people without their paying tribute to owners. That once done, the government can do nothing better than let wages alone. With a job open to everybody wages will go up everywhere. Wages will go up because labor will be in demand, and they will not go up at the expense of capital, for with plenty of free labor at work they do nothing but create capital. The minimum wage theory will not work in a world where there is no minimization of monopoly of the only thing upon which labor can be exercised directly or indirectly---the land."

----- EIGHT HOUR CLAUSE STICKS -----

Washington, July 13.--During the consideration of the naval appropriation bill in the house the Hughes eight-hour bill was inserted as an amendment for the reason that while the house had passed the eight-hour bill the senate had not yet taken action. In order that the senate might be compelled to act upon this legislation it was incorporated in the naval appropriation bill as an amendment. The senate finally concurred in, with slight amendments, with the Hughes eight hour bill, and it has been signed by the president. However, the Hughes eight hour bill does not become effective until January 1, 1913. In the consideration of the naval appropriation bill in the senate an effort was made to eliminate the eight-hour amendment on the plea that the eight hour day was already established by law. It was contended by the friends of the eight hour amendment that its effect was to make the eight hour provision effective, so far as naval construction was concerned immediately, and that if it was stricken out contracts could be entered into prior to January 1, 1913, which would not extend the provisions of the eight hour law to contractors and sub-contractors, on this naval appropriation bill, and which is a salient feature of the eight hour law that goes into effect in 1913. An amendment was finally adopted that carries the eight hour law into effect immediately on all contracts provided for in the naval appropriation bill. The amendment follows: "That the provisions of the act of congress entitled 'an act limiting the hours of daily service of laborers and mechanics employed upon work done for the United States, or for any territory, or for the District of Columbia, and for other purposes,' approved June 19, 1912, shall be in force as to all contracts made under this act from and after its passage."

TIN PLATE TRADE SUFFERS

Washington, July 13.--According to an article in a recent daily consular report the recent coal strike in Great Britain caused great damage to the tin plate export trade in Swansea. The exports of tin plates for May, 1912, show a total of only 23,986 tons, a loss of 18,775 tons compared with the same month of 1911. Swansea has lost not only its entire export trade of tin plates to the United States, but many of its important markets, especially in the far east, where the Welsh tin plates were in competition with the American product. In the warehouses of the Swansea dock and in stock there is a larger supply of tin plates than ever known in the history of the port. This record increase in stock is due to the loss of markets as well as to the congestion in shipping following the resumption of work in the coal mines. The present stagnation in the shipping trade of this port will no doubt tend to lose further markets to the Welsh tin plate trade.

COMPENSATION ACT LAUDED

Seattle, Wash., July 13.--Eight months' administration of the workmen's compensation act adopted by the last state legislature has been completed. The total number of firms listed and assessed is 5,200; employees listed and protected, 125,000. There has been paid into the fund from assessments, \$640,951.30. The number of claims allowed totals 4,525, while to meet these claims \$216,435.21 has been expended. The expense of administration is 11 per cent, but will undoubtedly be reduced, as the initial cost of inaugurating the act will not have to be met again. The expense incurred in administering the law does not come from the fund paid in by the employers, but is taken from the general fund of the state derived from general taxation.

SPECIFY UNION CONDITIONS

Vancouver, B. C., July 13.--The board of school trustees of South Vancouver recently awarded contracts aggregating over \$100,000 for the erection of additions to three of the school buildings. In the specifications for these buildings was inserted a clause which requires that union conditions, in so far as wages and hours, existing in the several building trades at the time of signing the contracts shall prevail throughout the construction of the additions. This result was attributable in a large measure from the fact that the secretary of the local typographical union is a member of the board of trustees, having been elected last spring as a member of the board by the working men of South Vancouver.

AERIAL SERVICE ESTABLISHED

Washington, July 13.--Aerial mail service is here. On July 5 the first letter sent by the United States aerial mail service was received by a New York newspaper from South Amboy, N.J. The envelope was stamped with the South Amboy stamp and also the announcement that the letter came by way of aeroplanes on special route 900.006. A Burgess-Tright hydroplane-aeroplane was the machine used.

CEMENT WORKERS

San Francisco, July 13.--The American Brotherhood of Cement Workers reports the recent organization of local unions at Hazelton, Pa., and Akron, O., with a good charter list.

Washington, July 13.--Enone of the recent consular reports from Italy a section is devoted to reciting the wages paid to women workers in the lingerie industry. In the Palermo district women's muslin underwear and lingerie waists are manufactured, the hours being eight or nine per day, with a wage of 12 to 25 cents per day, and 30 to 60 cents for skilled labor. Where piece work obtains 20 to 25 cents is paid for making a woman's plain skirt, selling at \$1 to \$1.20, requiring fully a day's work. In Florence laces and lingerie are also manufactured. The work day established by law is ten hours, and the wages paid range from 40 to 50 cents per day for hand work and 30 to 40 cents per day for machine work on underwear and waists. Hand embroiderers receive 40 to 50 cents and lace makers 45 to 55 cents per day. In the Leghorn district seamstresses working for dressmakers receive 15 to 20 cents per day for hand work on linens. Working in cloth, either by hand or machine, steamstresses are paid 16 to 22 cents per day, the working day in this district being ten hours. Those who work in these occupations in families receive 30 cents per day, board included, and their hours are from 8 in the morning until 8 at night.

LABOR SUNDAY

Washington, July 13.--Labor Sunday was first instituted by the Presbyterian Bureau of Social Service seven years ago, the Rev. Charles Stelzle being the originating factor. This bureau has been merged into the Federal Council Commission on the Church and Social Service. The American Federation of Labor has given its endorsement to the observance of Labor Sunday. This year the Federal Council Commission is making a systematic effort to have Labor Sunday generally observed in all churches throughout the country, and is sending out literature, explanatory in character, and urging pastors to feature this day. Suggestions are offered as to the methods to be employed in securing a good attendance of union men and women, as well as the unorganized. It is also further suggested that in all Labor Sunday sermons the subject be "One Day's Rest in Seven for All Workers," with an offer to supply appropriate literature on this theme. Charles S. McFarland, secretary of the commission 1811 Clarendon building, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York, can be communicated with if any further information is desired. Labor Sunday falls on September 1 this year.

DARROW ON LABOR DAY

San Francisco, July 13.--Clarence S. Darrow, now on trial at Los Angeles for alleged bribery, in connection with the McNamara case, has been extended an invitation by the organized labor movement of this city to deliver the Labor Day address at Shell Mound park on September 2. Mr. Darrow has accepted the invitation. It is expected that the coming Labor Day celebration will be the greatest demonstration of its kind ever held in this city; as preparations have been commenced earlier than usual. President Gompers delivered the principal address at the Labor Day celebration at Shell Mound park last year.

NEW UNIONS IN GRAND FORKS

Grand Forks, N. D., July 13.--Local unions of sheet metal workers, carpenters and painters were recently organized in this city with a membership that is encouraging. All of the men engaged in the building trades are looking forward to the time when an active and effective building trades council can be organized.

UNION BUSTERS AT WORK

Fort Wayne, Ind., July 13.--Some weeks ago the employes of the Packard and Bond Piano companies of this city organized a local union under the Piano, Organ and Musical Instrument Workers' International Union. As soon as it became known that the men had organized the president of the two companies discharged all employes known to be members of the new union. The National Piano Manufacturers' Association also appeared on the scene to assist the local firms. It is also stated that operatives were secured from a Chicago detective agency to accept employment in the factories and also join the union in order to secure a list of members. The list was secured and reported, with the result that 200 men were promptly locked out. There were about 100 men that had not joined the organization, and they were not disturbed, but they determined to make common cause and walked out in sympathy with the lock-out men. Both plants are completely tied up. The local, being a new one, is without funds, and is soliciting donations to carry on the fight. J. F. Elakely, 1903 Webster street, this city, is authorized to accept and receipt for all donations, which will be used to carry the contest to a successful conclusion.

MERITORIOUS AND UNIONLIKE

Portland, Ore., July 13.--No greater tribute can be paid to the organized labor movement than to recount its meritorious and self-sacrificing deeds. In this city only recently an incident occurred that shows not only fidelity to principle, but plainly emphasizes the altruistic spirit pervading the membership of our unions. Several years ago Mrs. Eva Shaffer was left a widow with five children to support. She was without means, and was compelled to exercise the most rigid economy to support her children and keep them in school. With commendable persistence she struggled on, but, as misfortune seldom confines its operations to any prescribed area, the brave woman was met with further reverses. Her little home was destroyed by fire, thus making her struggle doubly hard. But the Good Samaritan did not fail to put in an appearance this time. The carpenters' local union took immediate action and secured donations of lumber from the lumber yards and a number of union carpenters volunteered to rebuild the little home, which has been completed, and without cost to the unfortunate widow. It is deeds of this character that make for the imperishability of the unions of labor.

SUSPENDER STRIKE SETTLED

Aurora, Ill., July 13.--The strike of the employes of the suspender factory has been settled and the workers are returning to work. The contest has been of nine weeks' duration, and would have been settled before but for the fact that the management of the firm refused to re-employ the president of the local union, all other points at issue having been adjusted. Finally it was agreed to submit this question to a board of arbitration, and as a result of its award the local president was reinstated, but resigns from official position in the union.

LABOR CONDITIONS BAD

Eureka, Cal., July 13.--Labor conditions in this county (Humboldt) are bad, due to lack of organization. The building trades in this city are fairly well organized. It is reported that the woodsmen only receive \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day of ten hours. Efforts are being continued by the American Federation of Labor to organize the migratory and unskilled labor in this section of the state.

KNOCKS OUT 8-HOUR CLAUSE

Washington, July 13.--While the naval appropriation bill was under consideration in the senate on July 5 Senator Perkins of California submitted an amendment to strike out the provision, "that the coal shall be mined by labor that is employed at not exceeding eight hours per day," which was inserted and passed by the house. This refers to coal purchased by the government to operate its vessels. The senate concurred in the amendment of Senator Perkins and the provision was struck out. It was asserted by Senators Perkins and Lodge that it would be impossible for the navy department to get "eight-hour" coal for a considerable length of time. Another objection was that coal was mined and paid for by the ton. The bill now goes to a conference committee. Whether the opponents of the eight-hour clause can sustain their position before the conference committee is a matter of conjecture, for undoubtedly it is possible to procure immense quantities of coal that is mined by laborers employed eight hours per day.

DEFECTIVE RAILS CAUSE WRECK

Washington, July 13.--Experts connected with the Interstate Commerce Commission have for many months been conducting an investigation for the purpose of securing data relative to defective railroad rails. From information gathered it is shown that during November and December 1911, and January, 1912, there were 2,760 accidents attributable to rail failures, and of this number 936 occurred as the result of defective rails. The defects in the rails are due to the process of manufacture; and H. W. Belnap, chief inspector of safety appliances of the Interstate Commerce Commission, states that "present specifications and tests of rails, in so far as the detection of longitudinal seams is concerned, appear to be inadequate. It would seem to be time that some definite action be taken toward eliminating this source of danger and securing structurally sound rails."

TO SAFEGUARD ENDORSEMENTS

Washington, July 13.--Owing to the fact that occasional application is made by political aspirants to the organizations of labor for endorsement, and from the further fact that in this city the political cauldron is ever simmering, the local Plate Printers' union, whose members are employed in the printing of currency, has under consideration an amendment to its constitution covering this question. The amendment, if adopted, which it probably will be, will prohibit the giving of any endorsement for political preferment to anyone aspiring for any office of importance in the bureau of engraving and printing, or any position of prominence under the supervision of the treasury department, except upon approval by a vote of the membership, with a still further approval by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor.

VESSELS BUILT IN JUNE

Washington, July 13.--According to a government report just issued American shipbuilders completed 229 vessels of all descriptions during the month of June. Most of the craft were of the small wooden steamer variety, and the total gross tonnage for the entire number was only 31,385. Nine steel steamers were turned out; the largest being the Renou of 4,154 gross tons, built for the Standard Oil company, and the Sol Due of 1,085 gross tons, built at Seattle, Wash., for the Seattle Construction company.

PAPER MAKERS STRIKE

Washington, July 13.--After several conference held between the representatives of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the management of a number of paper mills in Kalamazoo, Mich., in which the paper makers sought to secure the eight-hour day, the manufacturers refused to concede and a strike is in progress. The mills affected are the Kalamazoo Paper Company, Bryant Paper Company, King Paper Company and the Monarch Paper Company. About 500 men are directly affected, but this means the closing down of the mills, involving some 2,800 employees. A large number of paper mills have been operating under the eight hour day for a long time, and within the past few months a large number of mills in the east have changed to the three four or eight hour work day. As a competitive proposition it is difficult to see why the Kalamazoo mills cannot also go to the eight hour day. The contest will be vigorously prosecuted by the paper makers.

ANTI-TRUST ACT DECISION

Washington, July 13.--According to a decision just handed down by the Massachusetts supreme judicial tribunal the owners of patents are included as coming under the operation of the Sherman anti-trust act. The case in which this decision covers involved the United Shoe Machinery company, and the decision, written by Chief Justice Ruggs, finds that, while the question of whether the United Shoe Machinery company is "an illegal combination in restraint of trade," and has monopolized trade and commerce between the several states," must be governed ultimately by decision of the United States Supreme Court, no word or phrase in the Sherman anti-trust act reveals an intent to exempt the owners of patents from its sweeping provisions against monopolistic combination.

WILL CHANGE MARINE LAWS

London, July 13.--In the investigation conducted by the Board of Trade into the Titanic disaster sufficient evidence has been adduced to compel a revision of the maritime laws of Great Britain. The attorney general has announced that the conclusions reached by the board of inquiry would be incorporated into protective laws, thus assuring governmental regulations to the end that sea travel shall be made as safe as ingenuity can devise. Sir Rufus Isaacs, the attorney general, maintains that the cause of the disaster was due to the high speed which the Titanic was making while in the dangerous ice fields, and also sharply criticises Captain Lord of the California for failure to extend assistance to the ill-fated vessel, with only fifteen miles intervening between the Titanic and California.

HALF HOLIDAY BEGINS

Washington, July 13.--The thousands of government employees in this city are now enjoying the Saturday half holiday, which will continue until the close of September. Under the executive order issued by the president in 1909, and which has been considered as a continuing order each summer since then, the civil employees of the government work only four hours on Saturday during July, August and September. The district of Columbia government employees also get the Saturday half holiday, it having been inaugurated a year ago. The half holiday is not charged against clerks who are taking their vacation during the summer months. If a clerk is on leave during the holiday period he or she is entitled to leave equal to the combined holiday period.

TO EXTEND CIVIL SERVICE

Washington, July 13.--It is reported from official sources that it is contemplated that ten thousand navy yard mechanics will come under the operation of the civil service law when President Taft signs the executive order now being prepared by the navy department officials, in conjunction with the civil service commissioners. Heretofore these employees have been shielded from political changes by a system of regulations governing the employment boards in navy yards and stations. The employees were subject, however, to change or abolition at the will of the person who might be at the head of the department. The men now in the yards are not to be required to undergo examination, but newcomers will be subjected, so it is said the plan provides, to severe practical tests, and must also pass physical examinations. It is also said that there will be a regulation that anyone leaving work and seeking reinstatement must place his name at the bottom of the eligible list.

CORSET WORKERS MISTREATED

Washington, July 13.--In last week's News Letter it was reported that the corset workers and the manufacturers in Kalamazoo, Mich., had reached an agreement and the strikers were returning to work. An agreement was signed by the manufacturers, but upon the return of the strikers they were subjected to such ill treatment, the management also violating the terms of the agreement, that it was determined to continue the fight. It is stated that the strikebreakers refused to work with the strikers and the company stood by the strike breakers. From reports it was never the intention of the company to abide by the terms of the agreement. The girl strikers are plucky and will continue the fight with as much zest as heretofore. At a meeting called in the interest of the strikers Miss Jane Addams of Chicago and Mrs. Raymond Robbins, president of the National Women's Trade Union League of the same city, delivered addresses.

JOIN REGULAR ORGANIZATION

Washington, July 13.--The Industrial Weekly, published at Syracuse, N. Y., prints this item: "The Syracuse local of electrical workers, which when the split between President McNulty and Vice President Reid came, were with the Reid faction and thereby outlawed themselves with the general labor movement (because the A. F. of L. forbid the recognition of the Reid faction); has returned to the fold again by its decision at its last meeting to use the old McNulty charter. This is very pleasing to the local labor men, who never ~~quite~~ felt quite disposed to fight the local boys of No. 43, believing that in time they would again become regular. Thus the local atmosphere in labor's realms has been somewhat clarified, for there is nothing so damaging to the labor movement as these internal dissensions."

FECHAN RESIGNS

Washington, July 13.--Francis Fechan, for a number of years president of District No. 5, Pennsylvania, United Mine Workers, has resigned. During the incumbency of Fechan intense internal strife has convulsed the miners' unions of the district, and only recently an investigation was made by authority of the international organization into the charges against Fechan of alleged irregularity in his last election. The report of the investigating committee completely exonerated Fechan. Immediately after the committee rendered its decision Mr. Fechan tendered his resignation as president of the district.

BOSTON CAR STRIKE

Boston, July 13.--The street car strike in this city is making headway. The state board of arbitration and conciliation is conducting an investigation, and as a result there probably will something material grow out of it. There are 3,500 strikers, and they are being fairly well provided with sustenance. The condition existing on the car lines is well nigh indescribable, with only few people using the cars, and accidents continue to be the order of the day, and blockades are not uncommon, the strike breakers being extremely "green". Those in charge of the strike report that they are satisfied with the present state of affairs, and look for a change for the better to come in the shape of consent on the part of the company to open negotiations. The business men and the public generally are sympathetically inclined toward the strikers.

NO SHUT DOWN FOR SUMMER

Pittsburgh, July 13.--With the thermometer reaching for the top of the tube the iron manufacturers have announced that there will be no summer suspension of the mills. This is unprecedented, for in the past, no matter how rushing business was, there has been a shut down of about a month, and often six weeks, during the heated period. Labor is as scarce as it was a month ago, and the big corporations are still keeping men at ports of entry on the sea coast to get as many as possible of the foreign laborers coming in. It is stated that the demand for laborers in the iron mills is greater at this time than for many years.

RETAIL CLERKS' CONVENTION

Washington, July 13.--The general convention of the Retail Clerks' International Protective association will convene at Columbus, O., beginning July 16 next. It is reported that the reports to be submitted to the convention will reveal a splendid condition of affairs, with a treasury in better shape than for years, and an increasing membership. It is also expected that the convention will be the largest in point of numbers that has ever been held by the association.

SECTION HANDS STRIKE

Ft. Wayne, Ind., July 13.--The section hands employed on the Wabash railway between Ft. Wayne and Toledo, and between Ft. Wayne and Montpelier are on strike. These men have been receiving the munificent wage of \$1.50 per diem of ten hours, and a demand was made for an increase to \$1.65. The officials of the company peremptorily refused concessions, although in this era of high prices the wages of \$1.50 per day is generally admitted to be below the broad line.

STATE COUNCIL OF PAINTERS

Worcester, Mass., July 13.--The Massachusetts State Council of Painters will hold an important meeting in this city on July 14. An effort will be made to secure an agreement with employers of the state, or by law, requiring rope rails around staging, and instituting other safety measures. As the new compensation law is now operative it is likely that the employers will prefer to co-operate in providing safety for workmen with more alacrity than formerly.

Thirty trade unionists in congress would be invaluable to the labor movement. Let's strive to accomplish that result.